LOLITA

notes by

Stephen Schiff

THE ZANUCK COMPANY

Lolita script by Stephen Schiff

VERSION ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. NEW ENGLAND COUNTRYSIDE. 195tk - LATE AFTERNOON

A beat-up 50s car driving slowly just outside a small town. It begins to creep over into the left lane, where it zig-zags very evenly, as though the driver were weaving on purpose. WE HEAR the voice of HUMBERT HUMBERT, chuckling delightedly to himself.

INT. THE CAR - DAY

Humbert driving, humming a theme from "Carmen" and laughing, a little hysterically. He is covered with blood, and there is a bloody revolver in the seat next to him.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - DAY

Two cops in the car. The driver slides the radio microphone back in its holster, exchanges glances with his partner, and guns the engine.

EXT. BEHIND A BILLBOARD - DAY

Two motorcycle cops give a sharp nod and pull onto the highway.

EXT. INTERSECTION IN A SMALL TOWN - DAY

Humbert sees the light turn red and blithely cruises through it. We hear him laughing, but we also hear soundtrack music, and it is eerie, wistful, not at all comic.

REAR-VIEW MIRROR

Humbert looks up and sees the POLICE converging, their red lights flashing. He mumbles inaudibly, giggling, spluttering with laughter until tears come to his eyes.

EXT. A ROADBLOCK

Humbert sees it, nods to himself, and drives gently off the road, his car bumping up a huge green hill.

INT. HUMBERT'S CAR

He lurches with the bumps, still laughing and trying to hum.

EXT. A HERD OF COWS.

They look up in mild surprise as Humbert's car boings to a halt in their midst. Humbert gets out, still mumbling and giggling, and, staggering slightly, makes his way a few steps beyond the cows to the top of a hill.

EXT. HUMBERT'S P.O.V.

A verdant valley with a little town at the bottom. Lights are beginning to twinkle as dusk falls, and WE HEAR children's voices. A group of KIDS are frolicking in the square below.

HUMBERT
(Half whispering)
Lo-li-ta.

We pull back to see the police coming up the hill behind him, gently grabbing him and bundling him into the squad cars, as he continues to laugh and murmur, and the cows look on.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE

Very institutional. This is a ward for the criminally insane. Humbert is sitting calmly in front of the doctor's desk, and the DOCTOR, an American who thinks a good deal of himself, is sitting behind it, reading aloud from Humbert's journal.

DOCTOR
(Somewhat wearily)
Lolita. Light of my life, fire of my loins. My sin, my soul.

As the DOCTOR reads, Humbert recites the words to himself, looking dreamy and pleased.

DOCTOR
Look, Mr. Humbert. We're going to level with each other, all right? You're a murderer. You killed someone, in a very brutal, I might even say grotesque way. Dr. Hansen and the others on our

staff have been very patient with you, I think you'll agree. But now some of the people in the DA's office seem to think you might not be fit to stand trial. Psychologically, I mean. So that's why I'm here. All right? I'm here to find out if you're fit to stand trial.

HUMBERT
How very trying for you, doctor. Now why don't you just continue with your reading. You were developing a rather lovely cadence, I thought.

DOCTOR
Mr. Humbert, this is not a matter to be taken lightly. I want us to work together on this. I want you to help me. All right? Can you do that?

HUMBERT
I can and I shall. I shall fight the good fight. But I do think that if you'd just read--

DOCTOR
Let's start at the beginning. You are--you've admitted it--you're an unbalanced man.

HUMBERT
Unbalanced is very apt, doctor. I certainly never said I was unbalanced. I said I was a monster. But 'unbalanced' will do nicely.

DOCTOR
Unbalanced, disturbed. Monster is a little strong, don't you think? We'll never understand ourselves if we think of ourselves in such...medieval terms. You're a

sick man, Mr. Humbert. You're an unbalanced man. But not a monster.

HUMBERT
That's terribly forebearing of you, doctor. But may I just say, perhaps you haven't read quite far enough --

DOCTOR
(his patience exhausted)
If you're talking about your little manuscript here, Mr. Humbert, I've read it. Some of it. Enough of it. When you set out to write this...explanation, you told Dr. Hansen that it would illuminate the circumstances surrounding the crime. So he let you write. And write and write. But this, Mr. Humbert. I don't know what your little game is, but from what I've read here, these first few chapters seem to be nothing more or less than a kind of ... pornography.

HUMBERT
I'm so glad you found some small pleasure in them.

DOCTOR
Let's get something straight right now, Mr. Humbert. I don't find this material amusing, and I certainly don't find it stimulating. In the first place, I consider this, this love poetry an obscene self-indulgence that this institution will not condone--from you or anyone else.

HUMBERT
(Unconcerned)
Oh dear.

DOCTOR
And in the second place, your little masterpiece here seems to devote itself exclusively to pre-pubescent girls.

HUMBERT
Nymphets, doctor. Not just any young girls. Nymphets. I am -- I do assure you -- I am perfectly aware of my condition. But try to understand. This murder -- whatever the outcome of my trial, this little murder is not what I regard as my true crime. Not at all. My true crime has to do with, shall we say, a young life derailed. Subverted. A young girl -- well, should I tell you all about nymphets? You may find that once you start considering them, thinking, dreaming -- that sort of thing -- you may find that you yourself... Well, let me explain.

EXT. A EUROPEAN PARK -- DAY

Humbert is sitting on a park bench, pretending to read but actually watching a gaggle of pre-pubescent girls jumping rope, playing hopscotch,

HUMBERT (V.O.)
Between the age limits of nine and fourteen there occur maidens who, to certain bewitched travelers twice their age or more, reveal their true nature, which is not human but nymphic. Nymphets.

During the following speech the camera caresses several of the girls playing in the park.

HUMBERT (V.O.)

Are all girl-children of a certain age nymphets? Of course not. Otherwise, we who are in the know would have long since gone insane.

One of the girls comes over to Humbert's bench, props a foot on it next to him and leans over and fixes her roller skate. Humbert watches, scarcely able to contain himself. The book is now in his lap, concealing the extent of his excitement.

CUT TO:

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN
Humbert in the Parisian METRO, basking in the aura of a young girl leaning over him to read a map on the wall, her curls dangling in his face.

HUMBERT (V.O.)
Mere good looks are insufficient. And a certain vulgarity may even enhance the elusive, shifty, insidious charm that marks the nymphet.

EXT. CLOSE-UP -- DAY
A class photograph of schoolgirls. The camera pulls back to reveal Humbert on a Parisian street as a proud mama, one of his neighbors, points out her charming daughter, who is by her side. We see her finger on the photograph, but during the following speech the camera shifts to the nymphet a row away whom Humbert is ogling.

HUMBERT (V.O.)
A normal man given, shall we say, a group photograph of school girls and asked to point out the loveliest one won't necessarily choose the nymphet among them. You have to be an artist and a madman with a bubble of hot poison in your loins to recognize the little deadly demon. The other children won't pick her

out, of course. And she herself will be unconscious of her fantastic power.

INT. CLOSE-UP
Humbert's face back in the DOCTOR'S OFFICE

HUMBERT
But doctor, I have known one, one and one alone, who understood what it was she had and was. And it is she whom I loved above all others, she whom I destroyed and whom I gratefully allowed to destroy me.

INT. HUMBERT'S PARIS BEDROOM -- DUSK
Small, sparsely decorated, but comfortable. A beautiful and extremely voluptuous WOMAN is undressing langorously, her eye toward the camera, which is Humbert's P.O.V. Her eroticism is overpowering. During the next speech, she gets down to a garter belt, and then glides toward us.

HUMBERT (V.O.)
For many years -- the whole time I lived in Europe, in fact -- I did try to lead the life my sex dictated I should lead. No, believe me, I never dared act on my darker impulses. In fact, when I lived in Paris, I actually married. She was, by most standards, quite sexually, um, palatable.

Mrs. Humbert climbs on the bed, her perfect breasts spilling toward us. They dangle near Humbert's face, which we now see for the first time in this scene -- his expression is that of a man who has just been told he must eat something very gooshy and very raw.

HUMBERT (V.O.)
But not by mine.

They make love, she on top moaning rapturously, Humbert on the bottom, emitting patently phony cries of passion, and, inadvertently, gagging and wheezing miserably.

CUT TO:

INT. FRENCH TAXI CAB -- DAY
Humbert in the back seat on his way to Orly airport.

HUMBERT (V.O.)
Just in the nick of time, an uncle of mine in America died, leaving me an aeroplane ticket and a decent annual income on condition that I move to the States and show some interest in his family business. Perfume. Sounded nice. And I could continue writing my pet project, a study of French literature aimed at American students. When I told my beloved about it, she promptly revealed the passionate affair she'd been having with a White Russian colonel. Well, a former colonel.

The cab stops, and the DRIVER, burly and smiling with a big moustache, turns to tell Humbert goodbye.

HUMBERT (V.O.)
Now a taxi driver. Actually, it all worked out rather amicably.

By the driver's side, waving a cheery <u>bon voyage</u> is Humbert's wife.

DISSOLVE TO:

HUMBERT (V.O.)
In America, I discovered that the perfume job, which mostly con-

sisted of advising on advertising campaigns, required very little of me. Indeed, so little that I felt I could just as easily live away from it all in some bucolic little New England community.

(I stopped here after a conversation you and I had about the direction you envisioned for this project. Then I began version two, not bothering too much with description and directions, concentrating mostly on the dialogue and the shape of the scenes.)

Lolita script by Stephen Schiff

VERSION TWO

Laura -
Skip these for now and go over to pp 13 - you can look at these afterwards if you like but they're a bit on the wrong track.

Richard D. Zanuck

same beginning as script number one
[car rolls up hill and into cows as credits run]
mental hospital, weirdos everywhere banging into walls, etc.
(I'll write all this description later)

[this version didn't have the voice-over from the book, but you could easily integrate that]

[this is a possible flashback--you could even do it from the institution where Humbert is confined after the murder of Quilty]

NURSE
Mr. Humbert.

HUMBERT
(dazed)
Mmmm.

NURSE
Mr. Humbert.

HUMBERT
Do I know you?

NURSE
Oh my God. Mr. Humbert. Don't you recognize me?

HUMBERT
Have we met?

NURSE
Now you just sit there quietly--
Orderly! Orderly!

HUMBERT
There, there, Miss O'Donnell.
Don't order up an orderly. I'm toying with you.

NURSE
My God, Mr. Humbert. You gave me such a scare. So you do know me, right?

HUMBERT
Know you? You're the most important woman in my life, Miss O'Donnell...Also ~~you're~~ the only woman in my life.

NURSE
I thought you'd regressed something awful. I thought--well, I don't know what I thought.

HUMBERT
You thought I was about to roll over and drool? As in the good old days?

NURSE
Well, you never did drool much, Mr. Humbert. You were good that way. But I'll tell you, you were pretty disturbed.

HUMBERT
Are you here to give me pills? Because I just want to say that, however fond of you I am, Miss O'Donnell, I can't. And I won't. I can't take any more of those pills. They're, I don't know, they're fuzzing me up.

NURSE
No, Mr. Humbert. It's not that.

HUMBERT
I've got to be able to write--you can see that, can't you? I've got to write my--I have a contract to fulfill.

NURSE
Sure you do, Mr. Humbert. No, the pills--don't worry about the pills. The pills are over.

HUMBERT
No more pills, nursey?

NURSE
No more pills. But I gotta ask you something. You ever been to New England?

HUMBERT
So now what? You want to electroshock me, is that it?

NURSE
No. Listen. New England. Do you like New England?

HUMBERT
I've been through all this before, Miss O'Donnell, and as for shock treatment, I must tell you, I simply don't think I can manage...

NURSE
No shock treatment, Mr. Humbert. No pills, no shock treatment, no...well, why don't you just come along. Dr. Bean wants to see you.

HUMBERT
Oh, Dr. Bean. Good Dr. Bean. Kind Dr. -- what sort of mood is he in today? Jolly? Is he jolly? Not too jolly, I hope, but would you say the general tone is jolly? Or dour? Or--just give me a little hint.

NURSE
Don't you want to see for yourself, Mr. Humbert? Come on. Let's you and me go see.

[DOCTOR'S OFFICE description to be provided later]

BEAN
Mr. Humbert. You're looking real good. Better, anyway. Feeling all right?

HUMBERT
Mmmm. Just.

BEAN
Mr. Humbert, I have some real good news for you. Now, I believe that just before your little, um, episode--

HUMBERT
Could you be referring to my nervous breakdown, Doctor?

BEAN
We can certainly call it that if you want.

HUMBERT
Oh, I do want. The sound of it rather excites me.

BEAN
Well, like I was saying, just before, correct me if I'm wrong, I believe you were working in the marketing department of your late uncle's perfume company.

HUMBERT
"Working" might be too... vivid a word for it, doctor.

BEAN
You weren't one hundred percent enthusiastic about your, um, duties.

HUMBERT
You have a way about you, doctor. A way of putting things. I admire it, I do.

BEAN
But, again, now you just correct me if I'm wrong, the terms of your inheritance were that you would leave your home in Paris, come to New York, and go into your uncle's business. Because otherwise, you would sacrifice, I guess, a pretty substantial monthly income.

HUMBERT
All quite true.

BEAN
And then some problems came up at the perfume firm because you seemed more interested in pursuing your, um, scholarly activities--

HUMBERT
You needn't sneer, doctor. My book is aimed at quite the most intelligent American schoolchildren, and their need for a comprehensive study of French literature has been deemed acute enough for me to receive a sizable advance from the publishers.

BEAN
I'm very aware of that, Mr. Humbert--you've made all of us here at the Institute extremely aware of the value of your work. Extremely. Believe me, I don't mean to sneer.

HUMBERT
(his jaunty facade crumbling)
Sorry. Feeling a bit...sensitive.

BEAN
That's real natural under the circumstances, Mr. Humbert. No, let me get to my point. The board of directors at the perfume company seems to feel that it might be better for everybody, for them and for you, if you actually spent less time at the company offices. Much less time.

HUMBERT
I need that inheritance, doctor. I'm afraid I can't quite carry on without it...

BEAN
Well, that's just it, Mr. Humbert. That's the whole point. The board, after lengthy discussions with the executors of the estate, has agreed that you will continue to receive your inheritance if you just, well, check in with the company now and again, do whatever small assignments they require, and, you know, keep on with your books and all that. I think they'd like it, in fact, if you got away from New York completely. Find someplace more, um, peaceful to live.

HUMBERT
They're afraid of another scene.

BEAN
Well, you can't blame them for that, Mr. Humbert, now can you? They're not used to, um, episodes...

HUMBERT
Nervous breakdowns.

BEAN
Whatever you like. Anyway, they're not used to these things on their premises. And I believe there was a girl involved. Apparently quite a young girl.

HUMBERT
Well, it was all a very large misunderstanding. Anyway, it's over, all that. I'm really quite pleased to hear about the company's decision. I was afraid you were calling me because you wanted to electroshock me. Silly. ...Wasn't it?

BEAN
Excellent. Then I suggest we get right down to--

HUMBERT
Wasn't it, doctor? Silly I mean?

BEAN
Mr. Humbert. All right. We considered electroshock. We did. You seemed really very despondent for a while there. But you've been coming along nicely, we've never had any indication that you were going to harm yourself or anybody else, and this decision by your uncle's company--well, it puts things in kind of a new light.

HUMBERT
You don't mean I'll be leaving here.

BEAN
Tell me, Mr. Humbert. Your marriage is...over, isn't it? Irretrievably over?

HUMBERT.
Irretrievably.

BEAN
I'm sorry. She's...?

HUMBERT
Remarried. Happily, I understand. A White Russian colonel, actually.

BEAN
Oh, nobility?

HUMBERT
He drives a cab at the moment.

BEAN
I see. But tell me this, Mr. Humbert. Were you in love with her?

HUMBERT
Never. Not for a second.

BEAN
Have you ever been in love? With anyone?

HUMBERT
Ah. Well, now that--that's quite a different matter. I haven't been entirely frank with you, doctor, not about that. You know, you've asked me all about relationships. And we've conversed on the subject of relationships, quite divertingly at times. But do you know you've never really asked me about love?

BEAN
Haven't I?

HUMBERT
Would the name Annabel Lee mean anything to you?

BEAN
Annabel Lee. Well, just the Edgar Allan Poe thing, if that's what you mean. When I was a child and you were a child, something something, kingdom by the sea?

HUMBERT
Doctor, I'm touched. No, really. Very moved. Grateful to find myself in the care of so rare a creature.

BEAN
A Poe fan? I'm really not all that well-versed...

HUMBERT
An educated American, doctor. Moreover, an educated American who shrinks heads for a living. And better still, one who knows a few lines of superior literature--beyond, I mean, the whimsical musings of that Viennese cocaine addict before whom you all seem to prostrate yourselves.

BEAN
Now, Mr. Humbert. I know you're a Freud hater, but even you have got to admit--

HUMBERT
Ah. I see I've trampled sacred ground.

BEAN
Freud didn't have all the answers, we're willing to admit that, but--

HUMBERT
I am sorry. I'll make a mental note to tiptoe next time. Now, let me get on with my little story. Her name was Annabel--not Annabel Lee, but close enough to afflict a young boy's fantasies. I was, oh, thirteen, and she twelve--but such a twelve, doctor. Her parents were old friends of my aunt's, and I was living with my aunt, Aunt Sybil, actually, at the family hotel, the Hotel Mirana. We owned it, you know, on the Riviera.

[as he speaks, we could be watching a flashback--I'll write it up later]

Annabel's parents had a villa not far from the hotel, and we met one day on the beach, where we talked about the sort of things European preadolescents talked about in those days--you know, infinity, solipsism, what if I'm the only person alive and you and the rest of the world are all my imagination. That sort of thing. She wanted to be a nurse in some famished Asiatic country. I wanted to be a famous spy. And all at once we were madly, clumsily, shamelessly in love with each other. Nothing we could do about it, of course. We were always being watched. But one day--the last day, actually, of our fatal summer, we managed to escape to a desolate stretch of sand far from her custodians and mine, and there, doctor, there we were on the very verge of possessing one another, forever and ever. I can still remember the

scent of her, some kind of toilet powder she stole from her mother's Spanish maid, and that mingled with her own biscuity odor--I've remembered it for twenty years.

BEAN
But what happened?

[back to the present]

HUMBERT
Two bearded bathers came out of the sea, yelling at us, joking, encouraging us, and bystanders began milling toward us, and it was over. The moment was gone. Five months later, she died in Corfu of typhus. (Suddenly so moved he surprises himself.) I never, I have never--(his voice breaks)

BEAN
Of course, Mr. Humbert. The shock of it must have--there, are you all right?

HUMBERT
Fine. Just give me a moment.

BEAN
Mr. Humbert, we all, all of us have our little pubescent crushes--even prepubescent crushes. We get over them. We move on. A good-looking young man like yourself--you've had lots of, um, encounters since then. Some of them, I'm sure, real fulfilling. Not to mention your marriage, however, um, troubled. Now look who's being Freudian, dredging up all this nonsense from when you were a kid. It's over. The past is dead and gone.

HUMBERT
For some people, doctor. I'm quite sure you're right. But for me... My worst fear is that it will never go away. I need to feel passionately about someone, doctor. I just sense, I have this sensation that I won't ever be quite right. That I'll always be back there on that beach--you know, interrupted, my one chance.

BEAN
I think it's high time you started packing. You can get morbid in here, brooding about the past. Did Miss O'Donnell tell you?

HUMBERT
What?

BEAN
Ramsdale. She was supposed to brief you. I'm going to have to talk to her about that. She's been getting--well, anyway, Ramsdale. Just the kind of little New England town where you can find the peace and seclusion you told me you were after. One of your late uncle's associates, well, his cousin, lives there and he has a friend, a Mrs. Haze, who has a room to rent. I see you're not real happy about this.

HUMBERT
Couldn't I simply find my own little flat?

BEAN
Try this out for a little while, Mr. Humbert. If you don't like it, we can reconsider.

HUMBERT
Does this Haze woman know...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LAWN AVENUE -- DAY
A taxi driving into a suburban street. It stops in front of a white-frame house, the HAZE HOUSE, and Humbert gets out, wrestles with his luggage and the fare, goes to the door, and rings the bell, looking a bit peevish, as if to say, Let's get this over with so I can leave. All this as we hear the following speech in V.O.

BEAN (V.O.)
She knows about your background in Europe, and your scholarly French project. And she knows you're a very distinguished author who needs a little peace and quiet. Your stay with us--well, that's our little secret. Just bear with all this for a while, all right?

A maid opens the door and lets Humbert in. The house is very fifties, and bourgeois-arty, with bad manufactured knicknacks ostensibly produced by the peasant peoples of various Third World countries. There is a staircase in the back of the room, and now, coming down it, we hear CHARLOTTE HAZE.

CHARLOTTE
Monsieur Humbert? Je presume?

HUMBERT
(almost rolling his eyes, but trying to be polite)
Yes. Uh, Mrs. Haze, is it?

CHARLOTTE
Charlotte. And I'm enchante to make your acquaintance. Oh, I know my accent must sound so...American to you. But I'm sure you'll smooth off the rough edges, won't you? I do have quite an ear, you know. So I'm told. It's just the speaking. I can read it perfectly. I love Flaubert in his native tongue. Don't you?

HUMBERT
Mmmm. Could I -- do you mind if I -- ?

CHARLOTTE
Oh, sit down, Mr. Humbert. I'm being so thoughtless, and you just arriving from your journey. Drink?

HUMBERT
No, nothing, thanks. Really can't stay.

CHARLOTTE
Don't be silly.

They sit.

CHARLOTTE
You're going to just adore it here. Ramsdale. It's a privilege. It's an actual privilege to live here. So quiet, and there's Hourglass Lake just forty minutes away. Actually, a half hour without traffic. I often just drive there, you know, for my little contemplation times. Les heures de contemplation, n'est-ce pas? And we've got our theater group--always the most laudatory reviews. There's Kiwanis, Rotary,

Lion's Club, Elks--not what would interest a man of your culture and breeding, I'm sure. But we have a wonderful chamber music society, which sponsors a lot of things. Oh, and there's Great Books--but I guess you've probably been through them all so many times you wouldn't care what we had to say about them. Maybe you'd like to be a guest speaker?

HUMBERT
I tell you, Mrs. Haze--

CHARLOTTE
Charlotte.

HUMBERT
Charlotte. I'm so awfully tired. Perhaps we could just look at the room, and then...

CHARLOTTE
Oh, I'm so sorry. I just--well, let's do the Grand Tour. Living room--you've seen the living room. These things are mostly Mexico. Harold and I--the late Mr. Haze--we adored Mexico. Aztecs, Mayans--the whole idea of a culture that sophisticated--and we think of <u>them</u> as primitive. I mean, look at us!

HUMBERT
Indeed. Yes.

CHARLOTTE
Upstairs. And this is your room. Space for a desk--anything you want. And at $20 a month, you can't beat the price. Over here, these are our rooms. And here's the bathroom--sorry, a little messy. I don't mind mess; it's filth I can't stand. But Louise takes care of that. Oh! Speak of le diable!

LOUISE
I'll go now, Mrs. Haze.

CHARLOTTE
Yes, Louise, all right. Did I pay you? I'll pay you Friday, all right?

LOUISE
That's all right.

They go back downstairs.

CHARLOTTE
Kitchen. And you know, if you have any special food needs, you just say. Well, I don't know if Ramsdale can provide foie grass like you're used to, but--what's that?

Humbert has pulled a brochure from his pocket and is studying it surreptitiously.

HUMBERT
What? Oh, this? Timetable. Just, for when I--You know I think I may have to go right back to New York. This afternoon, actually. It's the office. You understand.

CHARLOTTE
(taken aback)
I'm afraid you're not too favorably impressed. I'm sorry we're not as neat today as sometimes. Well, we're not especially neat, ever. But you'll be comfortable here. Let me just show you the garden. You'll be really very comfortable. Now don't say no until you've seen the piazza. I call it the piazza.

EXT. THE PIAZZA -- DAY
Sunning on a towel is LOLITA, wearing sunglasses and not much else. She is lissome, sexy, tanned, and decidedly twelve years old, and she gives Humbert a fetching look.

CHARLOTTE
That's my Lo--Dolores, my daughter. And these are my lilies.

HUMBERT
(shaken to his core)
Stunning. Utterly, utterly beautiful.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE BACK PORCH -- DAY
Humbert casually dressed, shoes off. It is obvious he has moved in. He is staring at Lolita as she plays. Suddenly he realizes she's talking to him.

HUMBERT
What?

LOLITA
What do you wanna bet I can hit that can with every rock in this pile? With my feet?

HUMBERT
Impossible!

LOLITA
Okay, watch. I've trained my feet [ping!] I've trained my toes [ping!] soooo perfectly...

HUMBERT
Incredible.

LOLITA
They're like kind of monkey feet.

HUMBERT
Almost exactly like monkey feet.

As Humbert and Lolita converse almost inaudibly, the camera closes in on her, caressing the parts of her that Humbert describes in his voice-over.

HUMBERT (V.O.)
Just look at the little bone twitching at the side of her dust-powdered ankle. That silky shimmer above her temple. Marvelous skin, tender and tanned, not the least blemish. The down on her forearm...

Suddenly the face of Charlotte rises into the frame. She has a camera.

CHARLOTTE
Don't move. Don't change anything. Oh, Humbert, really! You look like the cat who swallowed the proverbial poulet.

The frame freezes into a snapshot of Humbert looking very, very sheepish about something.

DISSOLVE TO:

Humbert at his desk, trying to write. He hears girlish voices outside the window, tries to keep writing.

HUMBERT (V.O.)
What is the matter with me?

He goes to the window, peers out. Lolita is outside strutting around with her friend ROSE.

HUMBERT (V.O.)
What is the matter with me? Why does the way she walks excite me so abominably? Turned-in toes, a kind of wiggly looseness below the knee prolonged to the end of each footfall. Very showy. I find she's completely eclipsed my lost Riviera love. And everything else, too.

ROSE
(faintly, to Lolita)
See you later, alligator.

LOLITA
After a while, crocodile.

ROSE
(starting to giggle)
Real soon, Daniel Boone.

LOLITA
Get fucked, Daffy Duck.
(peals of laughter)

HUMBERT
(chuckling complicitously at the window)
Oh my.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HAZE HOUSE -- DAY
Charlotte is on her way out the door for some shopping.

CHARLOTTE
Be back in about an hour. And don't let her go out with Rose. She's being punished.

HUMBERT
I'll keep watch.

CHARLOTTE
I'll get some fish for tonight. And I'll cook it moon-yar [her attempt to say meuniere].

HUMBERT
Mmm.

CHARLOTTE
Ta ta.

HUMBERT
Mmm. Bye.

Humbert moves through the house, distractedly, stealthily. He climbs upstairs, searching. There she is--in her mother's bedroom. She's fiddling with her eye.

LOLITA
Owww. Ow. Ow. Ow.

HUMBERT
Something in your eye?

LOLITA
It's like a speck. You good at specks?

HUMBERT
I have a degree in specks, from the Sorbonne.

LOLITA
It's right...there. See? I can feel it.

HUMBERT
Swiss peasant would use the tip of her tongue.

LOLITA
You gotta be kidding.

HUMBERT
Really.

LOLITA
Lick it out?

HUMBERT
Should I try?

LOLITA
Sure.

He does. It works.

LOLITA
Wow. Incredible.

HUMBERT
Now the other eye?

LOLITA
You dope.

She sees that he is puckering, bringing his lips toward her eye.

LOLITA
Okay.

He presses his mouth to her eyelid and for a moment the mood is oddly sensual. Then she laughs and whisks out of the room past him, saying:

LOLITA
Cornball.

HUMBERT
(overcome, and a little surprised at himself)
God!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE PIAZZA -- NIGHT
Humbert, Charlotte, Lolita sit outside on cushions, with Lolita squeezed between Humbert and Charlotte in a daughterly sort of way. Charlotte and Humbert are nursing half-empty wine glasses.

CHARLOTTE
I'll get more Vouvray.

She goes in the house.

LOLITA
(conspiratorially)
Make her take us to Hourglass Lake tomorrow.

HUMBERT
Me?

LOLITA
She'll do anything you say. She's getting a thing about you.

Charlotte returns and sits with them.

CHARLOTTE
Whisper, whisper. What are you two so cozy about?

HUMBERT
(covering for Lolita)
I was just beginning to relate my Arctic adventure.

CHARLOTTE
Now, Humbert. This has got to be a complete fabrication.

HUMBERT
(with more annoyance than the situation calls for)
Must I produce a resume, Mrs. Haze?

CHARLOTTE
Oh don't get all sensitive now. Tell us about the frozen north.

HUMBERT
Well, I was really telling her about the time I shot a polar bear.

CHARLOTTE
I thought that was Antarctica.

LOLITA
Those are penguins. Mother.

HUMBERT
Quite right. You can always tell polar bears from penguins--you know how?

Lolita giggles.

HUMBERT
You can't do this to a polar bear, that's how.

He pokes Lolita gently in the belly, and as he does the sound changes and we go into slow-motion close-up; every time he touches her, we must feel a kind of heightening. Then the ordinary sound returns.

HUMBERT
Can't do this, either.

He musses her hair, and we see it in the same way, and she keeps giggling, but we see that she's looking at him oddly.

CHARLOTTE

(slightly woozy from the wine, and completely unalarmed)
Okay. So what can you do to a polar bear?

HUMBERT
You can shoot him.

CHARLOTTE
Humbert.

HUMBERT
You wouldn't guess it, but I'm absolutely a crack shot. Trained in the Ardennes, roebuck-hunting, by my father--I can handle pistols as well. So I was ready, rifle in hand, when the polar bear approached. I thought he would charge when I shot him but he just sat down. And do you know what he said? He said, "Ah!"

LOLITA
Ah?

HUMBERT
Ah. And then he fell over. I wanted to see whether he was indeed dead, so I crept up to him, and I took my hand like this, and on the back of his neck...

Humbert keeps talking, but we hear only the amplified sound of his hand nuzzling Lolita's nape in close-up.

HUMBERT
Was he stirring? I thought so, for a moment, and I leaped back...

Humbert demonstrates, sliding his hand along Lolita's bare shoulder as he does; again, we hear the sliding sound amplified.

HUMBERT
But then he was quiet again. I had to be sure, so carefully, stealthily, just as though it were a pet dog, I moved my hand along its back, you see...

Again, we see the close-up and hear the amplified sound as he demonstrates on Lolita, and manages to brush her bare leg at the same time. The sound comes up on the distant, insistent ringing of the phone.

LOLITA
It's for me.

She leaps up and goes inside, slamming the screen door.

CHARLOTTE
You'll forgive Lo's bad manners, I hope.

HUMBERT
(a bit out of breath)
Perfectly normal in a child her age.

CHARLOTTE
Well, I still think she might-- Humbert, are you all right? You look feverish.

She touches Humbert's forehead to see, and he pulls away involuntarily.

HUMBERT
Just the wine.

CHARLOTTE
You liked it, though, didn't you?

HUMBERT
Well, wine has never been one of my --

CHARLOTTE
It's so nice to have someone around who appreciates the finer things. Ramsdale has its advantages, God knows, but it can be provincial. Dolores Haze, turn that thing down!

Lolita has just put on a pop record, and we can hear her singing along with it inside the house. The record is CLARE QUILTY's "My Carmen."

HUMBERT
Shall we ask her to come back out? I never told her the rest of the bear story.

CHARLOTTE
You can tell me. Dolores Haze! She adores that Clare Quilty record, but there's absolutely no reason why she can't enjoy it on her own time, at a normal volume.

HUMBERT
(almost to himself)
I hope I wasn't boring her. I thought she seemed amused.

CHARLOTTE
(yelling)
Lo!
(to Humbert)
That girl--and by the way, you should take note of this Clare Quilty...

HUMBERT
I hope I wasn't roughhousing too much with her, pretending she was a bear, and --

CHARLOTTE
...because Clare Quilty is a certain someone's dreamboat, and that certain someone thinks you look just like him.

HUMBERT
Like whom?

CHARLOTTE
Clare Quilty. He sings, he writes plays--like your own Jacques Brel. She's dotty over him. Actually, his family lives here in Ramsdale--isn't that amazing? Ivor, his brother, is our dentist, of all things--you'll probably meet him. So anyway, the other day she tells me that with a moustache you'd look just like him--like Clare Quilty, not the dentist. So I think you'd better not grow one, monsieur, unless you want a giant crush on your hands.

HUMBERT
(fingering his upper lip)
How...appalling.

CHARLOTTE
Oh, it's perfectly normal. But -- Lo, would you just, please, turn that down? She's always been a little spiteful. Threw toys at me when she was one, and it's been snowballing ever since. Next year, my God, she's a teenager, one shudders to think. Actually it was worse in Pisky--that's Ohio, where she grew up. She had bad grades--she just moped around all day.

HUMBERT
Why was she unhappy?

CHARLOTTE
My cher Humbert, what you don't know about little girls. I remember all too well--boys twisting your arm, banging into you with loads of books, pulling your hair, hurting your breasts--not that Lo has what I had then, poor thing. 'Course, moodiness goes with growing up, but Lo is really a handful. Rude and defiant, sullen--stuck Viola Miranda in the rear with a fountain pen last week. Know what I would like? If you, monsieur, happened to still be here in the fall, would you mind helping her with her homework? Especially geography, mathematics, and French--you seem to know everything about everything. And that way we could put her little crush on you to work.

HUMBERT
(a little too eagerly)
I'd be, I'd be delighted.

CHARLOTTE
That means you will be here?

HUMBERT
Always. Um, always intended to stay. Through the fall, I mean.

CHARLOTTE
Well, isn't that nice. Because you know, well, I know you're very busy with all your scholarly pursuits, but I've sometimes thought we annoyed you a little bit. Sometimes you snap at me so, and I know Lo can be a pest--Humbert?

HUMBERT
(far away)
I'd be absolutely delighted.

Humbert in his room, writing.

HUMBERT (V.O.)
What is it about her? I mean be-
sides the obvious fact that, yes,
she really is the same child, the
very same Annabel Lee...

We hear the phone ring downstairs and Charlotte saying, I'll get it.

HUMBERT (V.O.)
...with the same frail, honey-
hued shoulders, the same silky
supple back, the same juvenile
breasts I fondled one immortal
Riviera day twenty years ago. But
none of that explains this ...
agony.

Humbert stops, gets up, goes to his door and opens it.

CUT TO:

Charlotte on the phone downstairs

CHARLOTTE
I'm so sorry to hear it ... I'm
sure it's just a 24-hour
thing...Well, it is too bad...
Exactly, and I'm sure he'd enjoy
meeting you, too, and it's such a
lovely--what?...[smiling coquet-
tishly]...I know all about those
rumors...Loretta, stop. You
should be ashamed of yourself....
I do admit it. He's a very at-
tractive man, but that doesn't
mean...Oh, now...

CUT TO:

Humbert scowls, goes back to his writing desk. We hear Charlotte's coy laughter downstairs.

HUMBERT (V.O.)
The Haze cow is downstairs again. How is it that she manages to confirm these cretinous rumors by denying them?

The phone is hung up and we hear Charlotte start up the stairs. Humbert freezes, listens, notes the silence, and goes back to writing.

HUMBERT (V.O.)
It's madness to keep this journal, madness. But without it I think my agitation would overwhelm me. Anyway, I'm not worried. Only a loving wife could decipher my microscopic handwriting.

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)
Dolores, that was Mrs. Hamilton.

LOLITA (O.S.)
So?

CHARLOTTE
So Rose is running a temperature and she can't go to Hourglass Lake.

LOLITA
So?

CHARLOTTE
So you and I and Mr. Humbert aren't going, either.

Humbert creeps out of his room in his pajamas to listen.

LOLITA
Oh yeah?

CHARLOTTE
Lo, don't give me that tone of voice, please. We'll go next Sunday.

LOLITA
Oh yeah?

CHARLOTTE
Yeah. Are you ready for church?

LOLITA
I'm not going to that disgusting church.

CHARLOTTE
Young lady...

LOLITA
No picnic, no church.

CHARLOTTE
Fine with me, miss. I can do without your charming company. But I want your room spic and span by the time I get back.

LOLITA
(Just out of Charlotte's hearing)
Nah nah nah.

The door slams. Humbert listens for a moment, ascertains that Lolita has bounced downstairs, and then, still in his pajamas, creeps down there to look for her. He hears her in the kitchen, and, stealthily, arranges himself on the sofa reading a magazine, so that she'll see him when she comes in. Which she soon does, crunching an apple.

LOLITA
Whatcha doing, goon-face?

HUMBERT
What do goon-faces normally do on a Sunday morning?

Lolita plops herself on the sofa next to him.

LOLITA
How come you won't go to church with my mom?

HUMBERT
I might one of these days.

LOLITA
You're just like me, aren'cha?

HUMBERT
How so?

LOLITA
We're bad.

HUMBERT
Are we?

LOLITA
Mmm-hmm. Pretty bad. Watcha reading?

She snatches the magazine out of his hand. During the next few lines, they struggle for the magazine, and he winds up with it. She lands in the corner of the sofa, whereupon she blithely flings her naked legs across his lap.

HUMBERT
Thief!

LOLITA
Pig-brain! What is this, something dirty?

HUMBERT
Dirty! It's <u>Look</u> magazine.

LOLITA
I hate these magazines. Look. Life. Time. Why do they have to have such boring names?

She snatches the magazine back from him, and leafs through it, blithely crunching on her apple. During the next speech, she listens obliviously to Humbert, who counts on her interest in the magazine to prevent her from noticing that he's desperately maneuvering into a position where he can use her legs to rub himself into ecstasy.

HUMBERT
Because they're American magazines, and Americans are very dull, obedient people who can be controlled by the simplest of means. Excuse me [writhing a bit]. Just an itch. Now Americans, my little Lolita...

LOLITA
What'd you call me?

HUMBERT
Lolita. Do you mind?

LOLITA
I don't know. I guess not. [turning pages] Jeez, look at this Salvador Dali guy. Creep and a half. How does he get his moustache like that?

HUMBERT
He takes a pinch of wax, and he twists and rubs it around his moustache, like this.

Humbert rolls Lolita's calf in his hands, rubbing it against his swelling at the same time. Lolita still hasn't looked up from her magazine.

LOLITA
Yuck-o. Does he think that's cool?

HUMBERT
Cool and a half. Now as I was telling you about these Americans, if you categorize something for them--sorry [he's writhing almost openly now]--if you just tell them that what they're looking at belongs in the category of Life or Time or, let's say, Art or Music, why they'll swallow it up as happily as though it were--

LOLITA
What are you doing? You're all squirmy and I'm trying to look at Look.

HUMBERT
Look at Look! I'm sorry, I've developed this terrible itch--must be the fan in my room, it...

LOLITA
Wow, have you seen this Fabian guy? This guy is truly neat! Hey! You know Clare Quilty?

HUMBERT
...dries the air, I suppose. I don't imagine it would be fleas, would it?

LOLITA
He does that great song. You know. [singing] Oh my Carmen, my little Carmen ...

Her legs twitch on his lap as she sings, and he begins to sing with her, off-key, making up nonsense words that she corrects, and all the while rhythmically stroking her legs and moving them against himself. And breathing hard.

HUMBERT
Charmin' Carmen. Started garglin'.

LOLITA
Those magic nights.

HUMBERT
Those pre-Raphaelites.

LOLITA
No, come on. And the stars and the cars and the bars and the barmen.

HUMBERT
The bars that sparkled and the cars that parkled and the curs that barkled and the birds that larkled.

The sound of their singing fades, though we still see them singing, and the camera explores his hands on her legs and her legs on his burgeoning lap, and we hear now only the sound of skin grazing skin, clothes rustling, blood pounding, until, at the point of his orgasm, the real sound returns, with Lolita singing wildly and Humbert convulsed in ecstasy.

LOLITA
And oh my charmin, our dreadful fights.

HUMBERT
Ah!

LOLITA
And the something town where arm in...

HUMBERT
Ah! God!

LOLITA

...arm, we went, and our final row, and the gun I killed you with, O my Carmen, the gun I am holding now.

HUMBERT
Ah!

LOLITA
I'll get it.

She leaps from the sofa and runs to the phone, which has been ringing faintly for a few seconds now. Humbert lets his head fall back on the sofa; there is a dark wet spot on his pajamas in the region of his upper thigh. He rouses himself, covers the spot with his hand and looks toward Lolita on the phone. Lolita nods at him and makes a kind of yakety-yak gesture with her free hand. Her hair is mussed and her dress and bobby-sox askew; she looks as though she'd just had sex, but the blase expression on her face tells us she doesn't know it.

LOLITA
...yeah, but why would I ever in my whole life want to have lunch with you and Mrs. Chatfield? ... So what if Phyllis is there? Phyllis is a dork-face... Well, what's the surprise?...Tell me now...no, now....Now...Cripes, all right, I'll come... No, you have to come get me... I don't want to walk. Bring the car--my little Carmen.

She winks at Humbert in a surprisingly provocative way. Now he tries to get up, but his clothes are in disarray and he wants to make sure Lolita doesn't see the telltale spot on his pajamas. Just as he begins to sneak off the sofa ...

LOLITA
Okay. Fifteen minutes. I <u>will</u> change my clothes. Okay.

She hangs up the phone. Humbert, half out of his chair, and clutching his pajama bottoms around him, half-moves toward the stairs, then hesitates as Lolita approaches.

LOLITA
What's with you?

HUMBERT
With me?

LOLITA
Yeah, you're all crouchy, like you feel sick.

HUMBERT
It's that itch.

LOLITA
Itch? You look like you hurt somewhere.

HUMBERT
Oh, that. Toothache.

LOLITA
Toothache?

HUMBERT
Terrible. Just started last night. Think I'd better just sit back down for a moment.

LOLITA
You're so weird. Hey, wanna dance?

HUMBERT
(clutching his pajamas around him)
I'm sorry, I'm just going to -- hey, young lady, aren't you supposed to be getting ready for your mother?

LOLITA
Oh, just dance with me for a sec-
ond, you big goon.

She tries to pull him off the sofa, while he resists, frantically hiding the wet spot.

LOLITA
You can be such a drip. Hey, I
know!

She takes "Carmen" out of its sleeve and puts it on the record player, then heads dreamily upstairs to change, singing to herself. Humbert, relieved and still blissed out, follows her with his eyes, not noticing what we notice: that the picture of Clare Quilty on the record sleeve looks exactly like him, only with a moustache.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HUMBERT'S ROOM -- DUSK
He is asleep on his bed. He awakens to the sound of Charlotte's knock.

CHARLOTTE
Humbert...

HUMBERT
Eh.

CHARLOTTE
Je serve le diner.

HUMBERT
Oh. Be right down.

He dresses hurriedly, then heads for the bathroom, where his pajama bottoms are soaking in the sink. He gives the area of the spot a rub, rakes a comb across his head, and descends.

INT. DINING ROOM -- NIGHT
Humbert is astonished to find an elegant table set for two--with candlelight.

CHARLOTTE
(pouring wine)
Voila!

HUMBERT
Where's Lo?

CHARLOTTE
She went to a film, you'll be relieved to know--with the Chatfields. So for once she's out of our hair.

HUMBERT
(sitting down, dispirited)
Will she be back soon?

CHARLOTTE
Hope you like the salad Nicoise. Came from Gourmet magazine. Me, I'm just going to have a nibble--dieting, as usual. What?

HUMBERT
Dolores. Will she be back soon?

CHARLOTTE
Don't worry. We have the whole evening to ourselves. And I'll give you another piece of good news, monsieur. She's going to be out from underfoot for the next two months. The Chatfields are sending Phyllis to Camp Kewattomie, and Lo is going, too. On Thursday.

HUMBERT
(not quite hiding his horror)
What?

CHARLOTTE
Oh, she'll love it once she gets there. She's been doing nothing but moaning and groaning and bothering you all these past days. She can be a pest, but really--Humbert, my God. You look terrible. Are you all right?

HUMBERT
Toothache. Incredible toothache.

CHARLOTTE
Well, how awful. We're going to have to send you straight to Dr. Quilty in the morning. He's a better dentist than his brother is a playwright, which maybe isn't saying much in my humble opinion.

HUMBERT
No, that's all right. I'm sure a good night's sleep---

CHARLOTTE
Well, don't be silly, you poor sweet man. Sleep doesn't cure teeth.

HUMBERT
Are you sure she'll be happy there?

CHARLOTTE
What? Oh, Dolores? Well, of course she'll be happy. She'd better be, anyway. And it won't be all play, either. She'll learn how to fend for herself a little bit--she's really more helpless and naive than she seems. And she'll get a little sense of responsibility toward other people, too. Which can't hurt. Better than moping on the lawn all sum-

mer and using mama's lipstick and pursuing shy, studious gentlemen and throwing tantrums at the least provocation. Like the salad?

HUMBERT
Mmmm.

CHARLOTTE
(seductively)
Now. Shall we take those candles with us and sit for a while on the piazza, or do you want to go to bed and nurse that tooth?

HUMBERT
Um. Nurse that tooth.

EXT. HAZE HOUSE--DAY
The car is being packed for Lolita's departure for camp. Lolita is excited, Charlotte is hopping, Louise is lugging stuff around, and, across the street, old Miss Opposite keeps waving mindlessly while the DOG jumps around underfoot. Up in his room, Humbert is writing, but he can't help going to the window periodically to watch the preparations. Then he sits and writes again.

HUMBERT (V.O.)
Two months she'll be gone. Two months. And she won't be Lolita forever. She'll be thirteen on January first, and soon after that a young girl and then, horror of horrors, a college girl.

He goes to the window but the V.O. continues.

HUMBERT (V.O.)
Why does the way she walks excite me so abominably? She'll lose that, too, the turned-in toes, and that wiggly looseness below the knee. Two months of beauty, two months of tenderness, gone forever, squandered.

Charlotte gets in the car and slams the door, and Lolita gets half in on her side, waving at Louise, when suddenly she looks up at the house. Could she actually be looking at Humbert's window? A moment later she is out of the car, running up the stairs. Humbert hitches up his pajama pants, flings open the door, and they are suddenly in each other's arms, like something out of a forties romance movie. She kisses him full on the lips, he tries to speak but cannot, and a moment later, she is gone again, tripping down the stairs like the little girl she is. Humbert throws himself toward the window, near tears, and watches the car pull away, with Charlotte at the wheel, silently bawling Lolita out, the dog chasing the car, and old Miss Opposite waving from her veranda. Then more footsteps on the stairs and a knock on the door. Humbert hurriedly wipes his eyes. It's Louise.

LOUISE
My, those stairs. Got something <u>for</u> you, Mr. Humbert.

She hands him an envelope.

HUMBERT
Thank you, Louise.

LOUISE
All right, Mr. Humbert. I'm going now. So I'll be seeing you tomorrow.

HUMBERT
Yes. Right.

She clumps back down the stairs, mumbling to herself, and we hear the front door shut. Humbert goes to his desk and opens the envelope. His eyes widen.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)
This is a confession: I love you. I have loved you from the minute I saw you. I am a passionate and lonely woman and you are the love of my life. Now, my dearest, dearest, mon cher, cher monsieur, you have read this. Now you know. So will you please, at once, pack and leave. Go. Departez. Adieu. The situation, cheri, is quite simple. Of course, I know with absolute certainty that I am nothing to you, nothing at all. Oh, yes, you enjoy talking to me--and kidding poor me--and you have grown fond of our friendly house and even of Lo's noisy ways. But I am nothing to you. Right? Right. So please destroy this letter and go. I shall return by dinner time, and you must be gone by then, for if you are not, if I found you at home, the fact of your remaining would mean only one thing: that you want me as much as I do you, as a lifelong mate, and that you are ready to link up your life with mine forever and ever and be a father to my little girl...

Humbert crumples the paper angrily, and, still holding it in his hand, staggers into the hallway. Since he is going to have to leave today, he thinks he's seen Lolita for the last time, and he stumbles into her bedroom, thrashing through her dresser drawers, picking up underwear and the dress she had worn when he had his way with her, sniffing, groping at her sheets, her pillow. In the room are pictures of Elvis and Fabian and also a big picture of Quilty, and then Humbert's eye falls on a page torn

from a magazine and tacked on the wall: it shows a radiant young mother, a handsome, vital young father, and a bright preadolescent daughter. The camera moves in on the father's hand, which is nuzzling the daughter's golden hair. Then it moves up to where Lolita has crayoned an H.H., and an arrow pointing to the man. Humbert's expression changes. He's had an idea. He sits on Lolita's bed, uncrumples the letter in his hand, and rereads it.

INT. CAMP BARRACKS--DAY
A rustic corridor where a young girl has just picked up the phone.

GIRL
Haze! It's for you.

Lolita comes tripping toward the phone, still talking to a gang of girls behind her, and batting a tennis ball at them with her racquet.

LOLITA
Hello....Yeah...Hey, Humbert, what's up? ...Huh? ...No, I can't hear you, these guys--would you guys shut up, I'm trying to talk...Yeah...No, Mom left about an hour ago. She should be on her way home--whatsa matter? You're what? ...You're kidding me. Amazing...Well, that's cool, I guess. I mean it's kind of weird. When's the wedding?...